I will Pray with the Spirit, and I will Pray with the Understanding also.

Or, A

Discourse

Touching

PRAYER.

From 1 *Cor.* 14. 15.

Wherein is briefly discovered,

1. What Prayer is.
2. What it is to Pray with the Spirit.
3. What it is to Pray with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also.

By JOHN BUNYAN.

The Third Edition.

But we know not what we should pray for as we ought; only the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, Rom. 8 : 26 :

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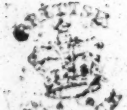

I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also.

PRAYER is an Ordinance of God, and that to be used both in Publick and Private; yea, such an Ordinance, as brings those that have the Spirit of Supplication, into great familiarity with God; and is also so prevalent an action, that it getteth of God, both for the person that prayeth, and for them that are prayed for, great things. It is the opener of the heart of God, and a means by which the soul, though empty, is filled. By Prayer the Christian can open his heart to God as to a Friend, and obtain fresh testimony of Gods Friendship to him. I might spend many words in distinguishing between publick and private Prayer; as also between the

in the Heart, and that with a vocal Voice: Something also might be spoken to distinguish between the Gifts and Graces of Prayer; but eschewing this method, my business shall be at this time, only to shew you the very heart of Prayer, without which all your lifting up, both of hands, and eyes, and voices, will be to no purpose at all. *I will pray with the Spirit.*

The method that I shall go in at this time, shall be,

First, To shew you what true Prayer is.

Secondly, To shew you what it is to pray with the Spirit.

Thirdly, What it is to pray with the Spirit, and Understanding also.

And so, *Fourthly*, to make some short Use and Application of what shall be spoken.

I. *What Prayer is.*

For the *first*, What Prayer is.

Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affecti-ate pouring out of the heart or sou-

to God through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the holy Spirit, for such things as God hath promised, or according to the Word, for the good of the Church, with submission, in Faith, to the will of God.

In this Description are these seven things.

1. It is a sincere,
2. A sensible,
3. An affectionate pouring out of the soul to God through Christ,
4. By the strength or assistance of the Spirit,
5. For such things as God hath promised, or according to his Word,
6. For the good of the Church,
7. With submission in Faith to the Will of God.

For the *first* of these; *It is a sincere* pouring out of the soul to God.

Sincerity is such a Grace as runs through all the Graces of God in us, and through all the actings of a Christian, and hath the sway in them too, or else their actings are not any thing

regarded of God, and ſo of and in Prayer, of which particularly *David* ſpeaketh, when he mentioneth Prayer, *Pſal.* 66. 17, 18. *I cryed unto the Lord with my mouth, and he was extolled with my tongue. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer*, Pſal. 17. 1, 2, 3, 4. Part of the exerciſe of Prayer is *ſincerity*, without which God looks not upon it as Prayer in a good ſenſe: *Then ſhall you ſeek me and find me, when you ſhall ſearch for me with your whole heart*, Jer. 29, 12, 13.

The want of this made the Lord reject their prayers in *Hoſ.* 7. 14. where he ſaith, *They have not cryed unto me with their heart* (that is, in *ſincerity*) *when they howled upon their beds.* But for a pretence, for a ſhew, in hypocriſie, to be ſeen of men, and applauded for the ſame, they pray.

Sincerity was that which Chriſt commended in *Nathaniel*, when he was under the fig-tree; *Behold an Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.* Probably this good man was pouring out of his

his soul to God in Prayer under the fig-tree, and that in a sincere and unfained spirit before the Lord. The Prayer that hath this in it, as one of the principal ingredients, is the Prayer that God looks at. Thus, *the Prayer of the Upright is his delight*, Prov. 15. 8.

And why must *Sincerity* be one of the essentials of Prayer, which is accepted of God, but because *sincerity* carries the soul in all simplicity to open its heart to God, and to tell him the case plainly without equivocation; to condemn it self plainly without dissembling; to cry to God heartily, without complementing. *I have surely heard* Ephraim *bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastized me, and I was chastized, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoak*, Jer. 31. 18. *Sincerity* is the same in a corner alone, as it is before the face of all the world. It knows not how to wear two vizards, one for an appearance before men, and another for a short snatch in a corner; but it must have God, and be with him in the duty of Prayer. It is not lip-

labour that it doth regard, for it is the heart that God looks at, and that which *sincerity* looks at, and that which Prayer comes from, if it be that Prayer which is accompanied with *sincerity*.

Secondly, It is a sincere *and sensible* pouring out of the heart or soul. It is not, as many take it to be, even a few babling, prating, complementory expressions, but a *sensible feeling* there is in the heart. Prayer hath in it a sensibleness of divers things: Sometimes sence of sin, sometimes of mercy received, sometimes of the readiness of God to give mercy, *&c.*

First, a sence of the want of mercy, by reason of the danger of sin. The soul, I say, feels, and from feeling, sighs, groans, and breaks at the heart. For right Prayer bubleth out of the heart when it is overpressed with grief and bitterness, as blood is forced out of the flesh by reason of some heavy burthen that lyeth upon it. 1 *Sam.* 1. 10. *David* roars, cryes, weeps, faints at the heart, fails at the eyes, loseth his

his moisture, *&c. Psal.* 69. 3. & 38. 8,9,10. *Hezekiah* mourns like a dove, *Isa.* 38. 14. *Ephraim* bemoans himself, *Jer.* 31.18. *Peter* weeps bitterly, *Mat.* 26.57. Christ hath (*Heb.* 5.7.) strong cryings and tears; and all this from a Sence of the justice of God, the guilt of sin, the pains of Hell and destruction. *The sorrows of Death compassed me about, the pains of Hell got hold upon me, and I found trouble and sorrow. Then cried I unto the Lord*, Psal. 116. 3, 4. And in another place, *Psal.* 77. 2. *My sore ran in the night.* Again, *Psal.* 38. 6. *I am bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long.* In all these instances and in hundreds more that might be named, you may see that Prayer carrieth in it a sensible feeling disposition, and that first from a sence of sin.

2dly, Sometimes there is a sweet sence of mercy received; encouraging, comforting, strengthening, enlivening, enlightening mercy, *&c.*

Thus *David* pours out his soul to bless and praise, and admire the great God

for his loving kindneſs to ſuch poor vile wretches. *Pſal.* 103. 1, 2. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy Name. Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diſeaſes, and crowneth thee with loving kindneſs and tender mercies; who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction, who ſatisfyeth thy mouth with good things, ſo that thy youth is renewed as the Eagles.* And thus is the Prayer of Saints ſometimes turned into praiſe and thankſgiving, and yet are Prayers ſtill.

This is a Myſtery, Gods people pray with their praiſes, as it is written, *Phil.* 4. 6. *Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by Prayer, with ſupplication and thanksgiving, let your requeſts be made known to God.* A ſenſible thankſgiving for mercies received, *is a mighty Prayer in the ſight of God*; it prevails with him unſpeakably.

3dly, In Prayer, there is ſometimes in the ſoul a ſence of Mercy to be received. This again ſets the ſoul all on

a flame.

a flame. *Thou, O Lord God* (saith *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27.) *hast revealed unto thy Servant, saying, I will build thee an house; therefore hath thy Servant found in his heart to pray unto thee.*

This provoked *Jacob*, *David*, *Daniel*, with others, even a sence of Mercies to be received, as you may see, *Gen.* 32. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Dan.* 9. 2, 3, 4. which caused them, not by fits and starts, nor yet in a fooliſh frothy way to babble over a few words written in a paper; but mightily, fervently, and continually, to groan out their conditions before the Lord, as being ſenſible; ſenſible, I ſay, of their wants, their, miſery, and the willingneſs of God to ſhew mercy.

A good ſence of ſin, and the wrath of God, with ſome encouragement from God to come unto him, is a better *Common-Prayer-Book*, than that which is taken out of the Papiſtical * Maſs-Book; being

* *See M.* Fox *his citation of the Maſs, in the laſt Volumn of the Book of Mart.*

being the Scraps and Fragments of the devices of ſome Popes, ſome Friars, and I wot not what.

3. Prayer is a ſincere, ſenſible, *and an affectionate* pouring out of the ſoul to God. O the heat, ſtrength, life, vigor, and *affection* that is in right Prayer.

As the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, ſo longeth my ſoul after thee, O God, Pſal. 42. 1. *I have longed for thy Precepts; I have longed after thy Salvation*, Pſal. 119. 40. *My ſoul longeth, yea, fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; my heart and my fleſh cryeth out for the living God*, Pſal. 84. 2. *My ſoul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all times*, Pſal. 119. 20. Mark ye here, *My ſoul longeth, it longeth, it longeth*, &c. Oh what affection is here diſcovered in Prayer!

The like you have in *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9. 19. *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do; defer not for thy Names ſake, O my God*. Every ſyllable carrieth a mighty *vehemency* in it.

This

This is called the *fervent*, or the working Prayer, by *James*, Jam. 5. And so again, *Luke* 22. 44. *And being in an Agony he prayed most earnestly*; or had his affections more and more drawn out after God for his helping-hand.

Oh how wide are the most of men with their Prayers, from this Prayer, that is Prayer in God's account! Alas, the greatest part of men make no conscience at all of the duty; and as for them that do, it is to be feared that many of them are very great strangers to a sincere, sensible, and *affectionate* pouring out their hearts or souls to God but even content themselves with a little lip-labour, & bodily exercise, mumbling over a few imaginary Prayers.

When the Affections are indeed engaged in Prayer, then, then the whole man is engaged, and that in such sort, that the soul will spend it self to nothing, as it were, rather than it will go without that good desire, even communion and solace with Christ. And hence it is, that the Saints have spent

their ſtrengths, and loſt their lives, rather than go without the bleſſing, *Pſal.* 69.3. *Pſal.* 38,9,10. *Gen.* 32,24,25,26.

All this is too too evident by the ignorance, profaneſs, and ſpirit of envy, that reigns in the hearts of thoſe men that are ſo hot for the Forms, and not the Power of Prayer: Scarce one of fourty among them, know what it is to be born again, to have communion with the Father through the Son; to feel the power of grace ſanctifying their hearts; but for all their prayers, they ſtill live curſed, drunken, whoriſh, and abominable Lives, full of Malice, Envy, Deceit, Perſecuting of the dear Children of God. Oh what a dreadful after-clap is coming upon them! which all their hypocritical aſſembling themſelves together, with all their prayers ſhall never be able to help them againſt, or ſhelter them from.

Again, *It is a pouring out of the heart or ſoul:* There is in Prayer an unboſoming of a man's ſelf, an opening of the Heart to God, an affectionate pour-

ing

ng out of the Soul in requests, sighs, nd groans. *All my desires are before thee* (saith *David*, Psal. 38. 9.) *my groanings are not hid from thee.* And again, *My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me*, Psal. 42. 2, 3. Mark; I pour out my soul: It is an Expression signifying, that in Prayer, there goeth the very life and whole strength to God. As in another place, *Psal.* 62. 8. *Trust in him at all times, ye people, pour out your hearts before him.* This is the Prayer to which the Promise is made, for the delivering of a poor creature out of captivity and thraldom. *If from thence thou shalt seek the Lord, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul*, Deut. 4. 29.

Again, it is a pouring out of the heart or soul *to God*. This sheweth also the Excellency of the Spirit of prayer: it is the great *God* to which it retires; *When shall I come and appear before God?*

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prayeth indeed, ſees an emptineſs i
all things *under Heaven*; that in Go
alone there is reſt and ſatisfaction fo
the Soul. *Now ſhe that is a Widow, an*
deſolate, truſteth in God, 1 Tim. 5. 5. S
ſaith *David*, *In thee, O Lord, do I pu*
my truſt, let me never be put to confuſion
deliver me in thy righteouſneſs, and cauſ
me to eſcape; encline thine ear to me, an
ſave me: be thou my ſtrong habitation
whereunto I may continually reſort: Fo
thou art my rock and my fortreſs; deliver
me, O God, out of the hand of the unrigh-
teous and cruel man: For thou art my
hope, O Lord my God, thou art my truſt
from my youth. Many in a wording
way, ſpeak of God; but right Prayer
makes God his hope, ſtay, and all.
Right *Prayer* ſees nothing ſubſtantial,
and worth the looking after, but *God*
And that (as I ſaid before) it doth in a
ſincere, ſenſible, and affectionate way.

Again, It is a ſincere, ſenſible, affe-
ctionate pouring out of the heart, or
ſoul to God, *Through Chriſt.* This,

through

through Christ, must needs be added, or else it is to be questioned, whether it be prayer, though in appearance it be never so eminent, or eloquent.

Christ is the *way* through whom the Soul hath admittance to *God*, *John* 14. 6. and without whom it is impossible that so much as one desire should come into the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. *If you ask any thing in my Name, whatsoever you ask the Father in my Name, I will do it*, John 14. 13, 14. This was *Daniels* way in praying for the People of God; he did it in the Name of Christ: *Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy Sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lords sake*, Dan. 9. 17. And so *David*, *for thy Names sake*, (that is, for thy Christs sake) *pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*, Psal. 25. 11.

But now, it is not every one that maketh mention of Christ's Name in prayer, that doth indeed and in truth effectually pray to God in the Name of Christ, or *through him*. This coming

to

to God *through Christ*, is the hardest part that is found in Prayer: A man may more easily be sensible of his works, I, and sincerely too desire mercy, and yet not be able to come to God by Christ. That man that comes to God by Christ, he must *first* have the knowledge of him: *For he that comes to God, must believe that he is*, Heb. 11.6. And so he that comes to God through Christ, must be enabled to know Christ *Lord* (saith *Moses*, Exod. 33. 11.) *shew me thy way, that I may know thee.*

This Christ, none but the Father can reveal, *Mat.* 11.27. *Mat.* 16.16. And to come through Christ, is for the soul to be enabled of God, to shroud it self under the shadow of the Lord Jesus, as a man shroudeth himself under a thing for safeguard.

Hence it is that *David* so often terms Christ his *shield*, *buckler*, *tower*, *fortress*, *rock of defence*, &c. *Psal.* 18.2. *Psal.* 27.1. *Psal.* 28.1. not only because by him he overcame his enemies, but because through him he found favour with God the

he Father. And ſo he ſaith to *Abra-ham*, Gen. 15. 1. *Fear not, I am thy ſhield*, &c.

The man then that comes to God through Chriſt, muſt have faith by which he puts on Chriſt, and in him appears before God. Now he that hath Faith, is born of God (*John* 3. 5, 7.) born again, and ſo become one of the Sons of God (*Joh.* 1. 12.) by virtue of which he is joyned to Chriſt, & made a *member of him*, Epheſ. 5. 30. And therefore, *Secondly*, He, as a member of Chriſt, comes to God, I ſay, as a member of him, ſo that God looks on that man as part of Chriſt, part of his Body, fleſh and bones, united to him by election, converſion, illumination, the Spirit being conveyed into the heart of that poor man by God; ſo that now he comes to God in Chriſt's merits, in his blood, righteouſneſs, victory, interceſſion, and ſo ſtands before him; being accepted in his beloved, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. And becauſe this poor creature is thus a member of the Lord Jeſus, and under

der this consideration, hath admittance to come to God: therefore, by virtue of this union, also, is the holy Spirit conveyed into him, whereby he is able to pour out himself (to wit) his soul before God, with his audience. And this leads me to the next, or fourth particular.

4. Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God through Christ, *by the strength or assistance of the Spirit*. For these things do so depend one upon another, that it is impossible it should be Prayer without there be a joynt concurrence of them: for though it be never so famous, yet without these things, it is only such Prayer as is rejected of God. For without a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart to God, it is but lip-labour; and if it be not through Christ, it falleth far short of ever sounding well in the ears of God. So also, if it be not in the strength and assistance of the Spirit, it is but like the Sons of *Aaron* offering with

with strange fire, *Levit.* 10. 1, 2. But I shall speak more to this under the second head; and therefore in the meantime, that which is not petitioned through the teachings and assistance of the Spirit, it is not possible that it should be according to the will of God, *Rom.* 8. 26, 27.

But to proceed.

5. Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, *in the strength and assistance of the Spirit, for such things as God hath promised*, &c. *Mat.* 6. 6, 7, 8. Prayer it is, when it is within the compass of God's Word; and it is blasphemy, or at best vain babbling, when the Petition is beside the Book.

David therefore, still in his prayer, kept his eye on the Word of God, *My soul*, saith he, *cleaveth to the dust; quicken me according to thy Word*, Psal. 119. 25, 28. And again, *Psal.* 119. 41, 42, 58, 65, 74, 81, 82, 107, 147, 154, 169, 170. *My soul melteth for heaviness; strengthen me accor-*

according to thy Word. And, *Remember thy Word unto thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope.* And indeed, the holy Ghost doth not immediately quicken and stir up the heart of the Christian without, but by, with, and through the Word, by bringing that to the heart and by opening of that, whereby the man is provoked to go to the Lord, and to tell him how it is with him; and also to argue, and supplicate, according to the Word.

Thus it was with *Daniel*, that mighty Prophet of the Lord. He understanding by Books, that the Captivity of the Children of *Israel* was hard at an end. Then according to that word, he maketh his prayer to God.

I Daniel (saith he, *Dan.* 9. 2, 3.) *understood by Books* (viz. the Writings of *Jeremiah*) *the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem. And I set my face to the Lord God, to seek by Prayer and supplication, with fasting, and sackcloth*

th and ashes. So that, I say, as the Spirit is the helper and the governour of the Soul, when it prayeth according to the will of God; so it guideth by and according to the Word of God, and his promise. Hence it is that our Lord Jesus Christ himself did make a stop, although his Life lay at stake for it. *I could now pray to my Father, and he should give me more than twelve legions of Angels; but how then must the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* Mat. 26. 53, 54. As who should say, were there but a word for it in the Scripture, I should soon be out of the hands of mine enemies, I should be helpt by Angels; but the Scripture will not warrant this kind of praying, for that saith otherwise: It is a praying then according to the word & promise. The Spirit by the Word must direct, as well in the manner, as in the matter of Prayer: *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also.* But there is no understanding without the Word; *For if they reject the Word of the Lord, what wisdom is in them?* Jer. 8. 9.

6. *For*

6. *For the good of the Church.* Th
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either to the honour of God, Chriſt
advancement, or his Peoples benef
For God, and Chriſt, and his Peopl
are ſo linked together, that if the goo
of one be prayed for, to wit, the Churc
the glory of God, and advancement
Chriſt muſt needs be included. For
Chriſt is in the Father, ſo the Saints a
in Chriſt, *John* 17. 23. And he th
toucheth the Saints, toucheth the Ap
ple of God's Eye, *Deut.* 32. 10. *Pſa*
17. 8. *Zach.* 2. 8. And therefore pra
for the *Peace of Jeruſalem*, and you pra
for all that is required of you, *Pſ.* 122
6. *Pſ.* 51. 8. *Iſa.* 62. 6, 7. For *Jeruſa*
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til ſhe be in Heaven; and there is no
thing that Chriſt doth more deſire tha
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place, that God through Chriſt hath gi
ven to her. He then that prayeth fo
the peace and good of *Sion*, or th
Church, doth ask that in prayer whic
Chriſt hath purchaſed with is Blood
and

and also that which the Father hath given to him as the price thereof. Now he that prayeth for this, must pray for abundance of Grace for the Church, for help against all its temptations, that God would let nothing be too hard for it, and that all things might work together for its good; that God would keep them blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, to his glory, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation. And this is the substance of Christs own Prayer, in the seventeenth of *John*. And all *Paul's* Prayers did run that way, as one of his Prayers do eminently shew, in *Ephes.* 1. 16, to the 21. and *Chap.* 3. *Vers.* 14. to the 19th. with *Col.* 1. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. And *Phil.* 1. 9, 10, 11. he saith, *And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in all knowledge, and in all Judgement; that ye may approve things that are excellent: that you may be sincere, and without offence untill the day of Christ. Being filled with the fruits of Righteousness which are by Je-*

ſus Chriſt, to the glory and praiſe of God.

But a ſhort Prayer you ſee, and yet full of good deſires for the Church, from the beginning to the end: That it may ſtand and go on, and that in the moſt excellent frame of Spirit, even without blame, ſincere, and without offence until the day of Chriſt, let its temptations or perſecutions be what they will. And becauſe, as I ſaid, Prayer doth ſubmit to the will of God, and ſay, *Thy will be done*, as Chriſt hath taught us, *Matth.* 6. 10. therefore the People of the Lord in humility are to lay themſelves, and their prayers, and all that they have, at the foot of their God, to be diſpoſed of by him, as he in his heavenly wiſdom ſeeth beſt; Yet not doubting but God will anſwer the deſire of his People, that way that ſhall be moſt for their advantage, and his glory. When the Saints therefore do pray with ſubmiſſion to the Will of God, it doth not argue that they are to doubt or queſtion Gods love and kindneſs to them: But becauſe they at all

times

times are not so wise, but that sometimes Satan may get that advantage of them, as to tempt them to pray for that, which if they had it, would neither prove to God's glory, nor his Peoples good. 1 *John* 5. 14, 15. *Yet this is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us: And if we know that he heareth us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the Petition that we ask of him*; that is, we asking in the Spirit of grace and supplication. For, as I said before, that Petition that is not put up in and through the Spirit, it is not to be answered, because it is beside the Will of God. For the Spirit only knoweth that, and so consequently knoweth how to pray according to that Will of God. *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the Spirit of a man that is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 11. But more of this hereafter.

Thus you see, first, what Prayer is. Now to proceed.

II. *I will pray with the Spirit.*

Now to pray with the Spirit, so that's the praying man, and none else so as to be accepted of God: It is so a man (as aforesaid) sincerely and sensibly, with affection to come to God through Christ, *&c.* which sincere sensible, and affectionate coming, must be by the working of God's Spirit.

There is no man nor Church in the world, that can come to God in prayer, but by the assistance of the holy Spirit; *For* (Eph.2.18.) *through Christ we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* Wherefore *Paul* saith, *We know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the heart, knoweth the meaning of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God.* And because there is in this Scripture so full a discovery of the Spirit of Prayer, and of

mans

mans inability to pray without it; therefore I shall in a few words comment upon it.

Rom. 15. 16. *For we.*] Consider first the person speaking, even *Paul*, and in his person all the Apostles. We Apostles, we extraordinary Officers, the wise Master-builders, that have some of us been caught up into *Paradise*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 10. 2 *Cor.* 12. 4. *We know not what we should pray for.*

Surely, there is no man but will confess, that *Paul* and his companions were as able to have done any work for God, as any *Pope* or proud *Prelate* in the Church of *Rome*, and could as well have made a * *Common-Prayer-Book*, as those who at first composed this; as being not a whit behind them, either in grace or gifts.

* *See Mr.* Fox's *Acts and Monuments. Volumn* 2.

For we know not what we should pray for.] We know not the Matter of the things for which we should pray, neither the *Object* to whom we pray, nor

the *Medium* by, or through whom w
pray; none of these things know we
but by the help and assistance of th
Spirit, *Mat.*11.27. 1 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10, 11
Should we pray for Communion wit
God through Christ; should we pra
for Faith, for Justification by Grace
and a truly sanctified heart? None o
these things know we. For, *As no ma
knoweth the things of a man, save the Spi
rit of a man that is in him; even so th
things of God knoweth no man, but the Spi
rit of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 11. But here (alas!
the Apostle speaks of inward and spi
ritual things, which the world know
not, *Isa.* 29. 11.

Again, As they know not the *Mat
ter*, *&c.* of Prayer, without the help o
the Spirit, so neither know they th
Manner thereof without the same; and
therefore he addeth, *We know not wha
we should pray for as we ought*; but, *th
Spirit helpeth our infirmities, with sigh
and groans which cannot be uttered.*
Mark here, they could not so well and
so fully come off in the manner of per-
forming

forming this duty, as these in our dayes think they can.

The Apostles, when they were at the best, yea, when the holy Ghost assisted them, yet then they were fain to come off with sighs and groans; falling short of expressing their mind, but with *sighs* and *groans*, which *cannot be uttered*.

But here now the wise men of our dayes are so well skil'd, as that they have both the *Manner* and *Matter* of their Prayers at their fingers ends; setting such a Prayer for such a day, and that twenty years before it comes. One for *Christmas*, another for *Easter*, and six dayes after that. They have also bounded how many syllables must be said in every one of them at their publick Exercises. For each Saints day also, they have them ready for the generations yet unborn to say. They can tell you also, when you shall kneel, when you should stand, when you should abide in your seats, when you should go up into the Chancel, and what you should do when you come

there. All which the Apoſtles came ſhort of, as not being able to compoſe ſo profound a manner. And that for this reaſon included in this Scripture, becauſe the fear of God tyed them to pray *as they ought.*

For we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought.] Mark this, *As we ought.* For the not thinking of this word, or at leaſt the not underſtanding it, in the ſpirit and truth of it, hath occaſioned theſe men to deviſe, as *Jeroboam* did (1 *Kings* 12. 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.) another way of Worſhip, both for *matter* and *manner*, than is revealed in the Word of God. But ſaith *Paul*, *We muſt pray as we ought*; and this we cannot do by all the art, skill, cunning and device of Men or Angels. *For we know not what we ſhould pray for as we ought, but the Spirit*; nay further, it muſt be *the Spirit it ſelf* that helpeth our infirmities; not the ſpirit and man's luſts. What man of his own brain may imagine and deviſe, is one thing; and what they are commanded

manded and ought to do, is another. *Many ask and have not, because they ask amiss, Jam.* 4. 3. and so are never the nearer the injoying of those things they petition for. It is not to pray at random that will put off God, or cause him to answer.

While Prayer is making, God is searching the heart, to see from what root and spirit it doth arise. *And he that searcheth the heart knoweth* (that is, approveth only) *the meaning of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the Saints according to the will of God*, 1 *John* 5. 14. For in that which is according to his Will only he heareth us, and in nothing else. And it is the Spirit only that can teach us so to ask; it only being able to search out all things, *even the deep things of God*. Without which Spirit, though we had a thousand *Common-Prayer-Books*, yet we know not what we should pray for as we ought, being accompanied with those infirmities that make us absolutely uncapable of such a work. Which

infirmities, although it is a hard thing to name them all, yet some of them are these that follow.

First, Without the Spirit, man is so infirm, that he cannot with all other means whatsoever, be enabled to think one right saving thought of God, of Christ, or of his blessed things; and therefore he saith of the wicked, *God is not in all their thoughts*, Psal. 10.4. Unless it be that they *imagine him altogether such a one as themselves*, Psa. 50.20. *For every imagination of the thought of their heart, is only evil, and that continually*, Gen. 6. 5. Gen. 8. 21.

They then, not being able to conceive aright of God to whom they pray, of Christ through whom they pray, nor of the things for which they pray, as is before shewed, how shall they be able to address themselves to God, without the Spirit help this infirmity?

Peradventure you will say, By the help of the *Common-Prayer-Book*: but, that cannot do it, unless it can open the

the eyes, and reveal to the ſoul all theſe things before touched. Which, that it cannot, it is evident; becauſe that is the work of the Spirit only: The Spirit it ſelf is the revealer of theſe things to poor ſouls, and that which doth give us to underſtand them; wherefore, Chriſt tells his Diſciples, when he promiſed to ſend the Spirit, the Comforter, *He ſhall take of mine, and ſhew unto you*; as if he had ſaid, I know you are naturally dark and ignorant, as to the underſtanding any of my things; though ye try this courſe and the other, yet your ignorance will ſtill remain; the vail is ſpread over your heart, and there is none can take away the ſame, nor give you ſpiritual underſtanding, *but the Spirit*. The *Common-Prayer-Book* will not do it, neither can any man expect that it ſhould be inſtrumental that way, it being none of God's Ordinances; but a thing ſince the Scriptures were written, patched together, one piece at one time, and another at another; a meer hu-

mane invention and institution, which God is so far from owning of, that he expressly forbids it, with any other such like, and that by manifold sayings in his most holy and blessed Word. See *Mark* 7. *vers.* 7, 8. and *Col.* 2. *vers.* 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. *Deut.* 12. 30, 31, 32. *Prov.* 30. 6. *Deut.* 4. 2. *Rev.* 22. 18. For right Prayer, must aswel in the outward part of it in the outward expression, as in the inward intention, come from what the soul doth apprehend in the light of the Spirit; otherwise it is condemned as vain and an abomination; (*Mark* 7.) because the heart and tongue do not go along joyntly in the same, *Prov.* 21. 9. *Isa.* 29. 13. neither indeed can they, unless the Spirit help our infirmities. And this *David* knew full well, which did make him cry, *Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise*, Psal. 51. 10, 11.

I suppose, there is none can imagine but that *David* could speak and express himself as well as others, nay, as any

in

in our generation, as is clearly manifested by his word, and his works. Nevertheless, when this good man, this Prophet, comes into God's Worship, then the Lord must help, or he can do nothing; *Lord open thou my lips, and then my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* He could not speak one right word, except the Spirit it self gave utterance: *For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit it self helpeth our infirmities.*

But *Secondly*, It must be a praying with the Spirit, that is the effectual praying; because, without that, as men are senceless, so hypocritical, cold, and unseemly in their prayers; and so, they with their prayers, are both rendred abominable to God, *Mat.* 23. 14. *Mark* 12. 40. It is not the excellency of the voice, nor the seeming affection, and earnestness of him that prayeth, that is any thing regarded of God without it, *Luke* 18. 11, 12. *Isa.* 58. 2, 3. For man, as man, is so full of all manner of wickedness, that he cannot keep a word,

or

or thought, ſo *much leſs a piece of prayer clean*, and *acceptable to God through Chriſt*. And for this cauſe, the Phariſees, with their prayers, were rejected. No queſtion, but they were excellently able to expreſs themſelves in words, and alſo for length of time too they were very notable; but they had not the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt to help them, and therefore they did what they did with their infirmities or weakneſſes only, and ſo fell ſhort of a ſincere, ſenſible, affectionate pouring out of their ſouls to God through the ſtrength of the Spirit. That is the prayer that goeth to Heaven, that is ſent thither in the ſtrength of the Spirit. For,

Thirdly, Nothing but the Spirit can ſhew a man clearly his miſery by nature, and ſo put a man into a poſture of prayer. Talk is but talk, as we uſe to ſay, and ſo it is but mouth-worſhip, if there be not a ſence of miſery, and that effectually too.

O the curſed hypocriſie that is in moſt hearts, and that accompanieth many thou-

houſands of praying men, that would
e ſo looked upon in this day, and all
or want of a ſence of their miſery!
ut now the Spirit, that will ſweetly
new the ſoul its miſery, where it is, and
hat is like to become of it; alſo the
ntolerableneſs of that condition: For
is the Spirit that doth effectually *con-*
vince of ſin and miſery, without the Lord
Jeſus, John 16. 7, 8, 9. and ſo puts the
ſoul into a ſweet, ſerious, ſenſible, af-
fectionate way of praying to God ac-
cording to his Word.

Fourthly, If men did ſee their ſins,
yet without the help of the Spirit, they
would not pray: for they would run
away from God, with *Cain* and *Judas*,
and utterly deſpair of mercy, were it
not for the Spirit. When a man is in-
deed ſenſible of his ſin and God's curſe,
then it is an hard thing to perſwade
him to pray; for ſaith his heart, *There*
is no hope, it is in vain to ſeek God, Jer.
2. 25. Jer. 18. 12. I am ſo vile, ſo
wretched, and ſo curſed a creature, that
I ſhall never be regarded. Now here
comes

comes the Spirit, and ſtayeth the ſoul helpeth it to hold up its face to God, b letting into the heart ſome ſmall senc of mercy, to encourage it to go t God; and hence it is called the *Com forter*, John 14. 26.

Fifthly, It muſt be in, or with th Spirit; For without that, no man ca know how he ſhould come to God th right way. Men may eaſily ſay, the come to God in his Son: but it is th hardeſt thing of a thouſand to come t God aright, and in his own way, with out the Spirit. *It is the ſpirit that ſearch eth all things, yea, the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 12. It is the Spirit that muſt ſhew us the way of coming to God, and alſo what there is in God that makes him deſirable. *I beſeech thee* (ſaith *Moſes*) *ſhew me thy way, that I may know thee*, Exod. 33. 13. And John 16. 14. *He ſhall take of mine, and ſhall ſhew it unto you.*

Sixthly, Becauſe without the Spirit, though a man did ſee his miſery, and alſo the way to come to God; yet he would

would never be able to claim a ſhare in either God, Chriſt, or Mercy, with Gods approbation. O how great a task is it, for a poor ſoul that becomes ſenſible of ſin, and the wrath of God, to ſay in Faith, but this one word, *Father!* I tell you, how ever hypocrites think, yet the Chriſtian, that is ſo indeed, finds all the difficulty in this very thing, it cannot ſay, God is its *Father*.

Oh! ſaith he, I dare not call him Father; and hence it is that the Spirit muſt be ſent into the hearts of Gods people for this very thing, to cry, *Father*, Gal. 4. 6. it being too great a work for any man to do *knowingly*, and *believingly*, without it. When I ſay, *knowingly*, I mean, knowing what it is to be a Child of God, and to be born again. And when I ſay, *believingly*, I mean for the ſoul to believe, and that from good experience, that the work of Grace is wrought in him: this is the right calling of God *Father*; and not as many do, to ſay in a babling way, the Lords Prayer (ſo called) by heart, as it lyeth

lyeth in the words of the Book. No here is the life of Prayer, when in, with the Spirit, a man being made sen sible of sin, and how to come to th Lord for mercy; he comes, I say, i the strength of the Spirit, and cryeth *Father*.

That one word spoken in Faith is better than a thousand prayers, a men call them, written and read in formal, cold, luke-warm way.

Oh how far short are those people o being sensible of this, who count it e nough to teach themselves and chil dren, to say the Lords Prayer, th Creed, with other sayings; when a God knows they are senceless of them selves, their misery, or what it is to b brought to God through Christ!

Ah poor souls! study your misery and cry to God to shew you your con fused blindness and ignorance, befor you be so rife in calling God you Father, or learning your children ei ther so to say. And know, that to say God is your Father, in a way of pray er

r, or conference, without any experiment of the work of grace on your ouls, it is to say, you are *Jews*, and are ot, and so to lie.

You say, *Our Father*: God saith, ou blaspheme. You say, you are *Jews*, hat is, true Christians: God saith, you ie. *Behold, I will make them of the Synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews nd are not, but do lie. And I know the blasphemy of them that say, they are Jews, nd are not, but are the Synagogue of Satan*, Rev. 3. 9. Rev. 2. 9.

And so much the greater the sin is, by how much the more the sinner boasts it with a pretended sanctity, as the *Jews* did to Christ, in *Joh.* 8. 41, to 45. which made Christ even in plain terms to tell them their doom, for all their hypocritical pretences. And yet forsooth, every cursed whoremaster, thief and drunkard, swearer, and perjured person; they that have not only been such in times past, but are even so still; these, I say, by some must be counted the only honest men, and all because,

with

with their blaſphemous throats and hy
pocritical hearts, they will come t
Church and ſay, *Our Father*. Nay fur
ther, theſe men though every time the
ſay to God, *Our Father*, do moſt abo
minably blaſpheme, yet they muſt b
compelled thus to do. And becauſ
others that are of more ſober Princi
ples, ſcruple the truth of ſuch vain Tra
ditions; therefore they muſt be looke
upon to be the only Enemies of Go
and the Nation, *Iſa.* 53. 10. when a
it is their own curſed Superſtition tha
doth ſet the great God againſt them
and cauſe him to count them for hi
enemies. And yet, juſt like to *Bonner*
that blood-red *Perſecutor*, they com-
mend (I ſay) theſe wretches altnough
never ſo vile (if they cloſe in with
their Traditions) to be good Church-
men, the honeſt ſubjects; while God's
People are (as it hath alwayes been,
Ezra 4. 12, to 16.) looked upon to b
a turbulent, ſeditious, and factious peo-
ple.

Therefore give me leave a little to
reaſon

reason with thee, thou poor, blind, ignorant Sot; It may be, thy great prayer is to say, *Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.* Dost thou know the meaning of the very first words of this Prayer? Canst thou indeed, with the rest of the Saints, cry, *Our Father?* Art thou truly born again? hast thou received the Spirit of Adoption? dost thou see thy self in Christ? and canst thou come to God as a Member of him? Or, art thou ignorant of these things, and yet dareſt say, *Our Father?* Is not the Devil thy Father (*John* 8. 44.) and dost thou not do the deeds of the flesh? and yet dareſt thou say to God, *Our Father?* Nay, art thou not a desperate Persecutor of the Children of God? hast thou not cursed them in thy heart many a time? And yet dost thou out of thy blasphemous throat suffer these words to come, even, *Our Father?*

He is their Father, whom thou hateſt and persecuteſt.

But as the Devil presented himself amongst the Sons of God, *Job* 1. when they

they were to present themselves before the Father, even our Father; so is it now: because the Saints are commanded to say, *Our Father*; therefore all the blind ignorant rabble in the world they must also use the same words, *Our Father*.

Secondly, And dost thou indeed say *Hallowed be thy Name*, with thy heart? Dost thou study by all honest and lawful ways, to advance the Name, Holiness and Majesty of God? Doth thy heart and conversation agree with this passage? Dost thou strive to imitate Christ in all thy works of Righteousness, which God hath commanded of thee, and prompt thee forwards to? If is so, if thou beest one that canst truly with God's allowance cry, *Our Father*.

Or, is it not the least of thy thought all the day? and dost thou not clearly make it appear that thou art a cursed Hypocrite, by condemning that with thy daily practice, which thou pretendest in thy praying with thy dissembling tongue?

Thirdly

Thirdly, Wouldeſt thou have the *Kingdom of God come indeed*, and alſo Will to be done in Earth as it is in Heaven? Nay, notwithſtanding thou, cording to the form, ſay'ſt, *Thy Kingom come*; yet, would it not make thee ady to run mad, to hear the Trumpet und, to ſee the Dead ariſe, and thy lf juſt now to go and appear before od, to reckon for all the deeds thou ſt done in the Body? Nay are not very thoughts of it altogether diſeaſing to thee? And if God's Will ould be done on Earth, as it is in eaven, muſt it not be thy ruine?

There is never a Rebel in Heaven ainſt God, and if he ſhould ſo deal Earth, muſt he not whirle thee down Hell?

And ſo of the reſt of the Petitis.

Ah! how ſadly would even thoſe en look, and with what terror would ey walk up and down the world, if ey did but know the lying and blaſpheming

pheming that proceedeth out of the mouth, even in their most pretended sanctity?

The Lord awaken you, and lea your poor souls, in all humility, to ta heed, that you be not rash and una vised with your heart, and much mo with your mouth; when you appear b fore God (as the wise man saith) *not rash with thy mouth, and let not thi heart be hasty to utter any thing*; espec ally to call God *Father*, without sor blessed experience when thou come before God. But I pass this.

Seventhly, It must be a praying wi the Spirit if it be accepted; becaus there is nothing but the Spirit can li up the soul or heart to God in Praye *The preparation of the heart in man, a the answer of the tongue is from the Lor Prov.* 16. 1. That is, In every wo for God (and especially in Prayer) the heart run with the tongue, it mu be prepared by the Spirit of God.

Indeed the tongue is very apt (of

self

elf) to run without either Fear or Wiſdom. But when it is the anſwer of he heart, and that ſuch an heart as is repared by the Spirit of God; then it peaks ſo as God commands and doth eſire.

They are mighty words of *David*, where he ſaith, *That he lifteth his heart nd his ſoul to God*, Pſal. 25. 1.

It is a great work for any man without the ſtrength of the Spirit; and herefore I conceive, that this is one f the great reaſons why the Spirit of God is called a Spirit of *Supplication*, *Zech.* 12. 11. becauſe it is that which elpeth the heart, when it ſupplicates ndeed, to do it.

And therefore ſaith *Paul*, Eph. 6. 18. *Praying with all Prayer and Supplicaion in the Spirit.* And ſo in my Text, *I will pray with the Spirit.*

Prayer, without the heart be in it, is ike a ſound without life; and a heart, without it be lifted up of the Spirit, will never pray to God.

Eighthly, As the heart muſt be lift-

ed up by the Spirit if it pray aright; so also it must be held up by the Spirit when it is up, if it continue to pray aright.

I do not know what, or how it is with other hearts, whether they be lifted up by the Spirit of God, and so continued, or no: But this I am sure of;

First, That it is impossible that all the Prayer-Books that men have made in the World, should lift up or prepare the heart; that is the work of the great God himself.

And in the *Second* place, I am sure, that they are as far from keeping it up, when it is up.

And indeed here is the life of Prayer, to have the heart kept with God in the duty.

Exod. 17. 12. It was a great matter for *Moses* to keep his *hands* lifted up to God in Prayer; but how much more then to keep the heart in it!

The want of this is that which God complains of, *Ezek.* 33. *That they draw nigh*

nigh to him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him, (but chiefly) *they that walk after the Commandments and Traditions of men*: as the scope of *Mat.* 15. 8,9. doth testifie.

And verily, may I but speak my own Experience, and from that tell you the difficulty of Praying to God as I ought; it is enough to make your poor, blind, carnal men, to entertain strange thoughts of me. For, as for my heart, when I go to pray, I find it so loth to go to God, and when it is with him, so loth to stay with him, that many times I am forced in my Prayers; *first*, to beg of God that he would take mine heart, and set it on himself in Christ, and when it is there, that he would keep it there (*Psal.* 86. 11.) Nay, many times I know not what to pray for, I am so blind; nor how to pray, I am so ignorant; *only* (blessed be Grace) *the Spirit helps our infirmities.*

Oh the starting-holes that the heart hath in the time of Prayer! none

knows how many by-wayes the heart hath, and back-lains, to slip away from the presence of God. How much pride also, if enabled with expressions? how much hypocrisie, if before others? And how little conscience is there made of Prayer between God and the Soul in secret, unless the *Spirit of Supplication* be there to help?

When the Spirit gets into the heart, then there is Prayer indeed, and not till then.

Ninthly, The soul that doth rightly pray, it must be in and with the help and strength of the Spirit; because it is impossible that a man should express himself in Prayer without it: when I say it is impossible for a man to express himself in Prayer without it, I mean that it is impossible that the heart in a sincere and sensible affectionate way, should pour out it self before God, with those groans and sighs that come from a truly praying heart, without the assistance of the Spirit. It is not the mouth that is the main thing to be

looked

looked at in Prayer, whether the heart be so full of affection and earnestness in Prayer with God, that it is impossible to express their sence and desire. For then a man desires indeed, when his desires are so strong, many and mighty, that all the words, tears and groans that can come from the heart, cannot utter them. *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.*

That is but poor prayer, which is only discovered in so many words.

A man that truly prayes one Prayer, shall after that never be able to express with his mouth or pen, the unutterable desires, sence, affection and longing, that went to God in that Prayer.

The best Prayers have often more groans than words; and those words that it hath, are but a lean and shallow representation of the heart, life, and spirit of that Prayer. You do not find any words of Prayer that we read of, come out of the mouth of *Moses*,

when he was going out of *Egypt*, an
was followed by *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 14
15. and yet he made Heaven ring a
gain with his cry : But it was the un
expreſſible, and unſearchable groan
and cryings of his ſoul, in and with th
Spirit.

God is *the God of Spirits*, Numb. 16
22. and his eyes look farther than th
outſide of any duty whatſoever, 1 *Sam*
16, 7.

I doubt this is but little thought o
by the moſt of them that would b
looked upon as a praying People.

The nearer a man comes in any wor
that God commands him, to the doin
of it according to his will ; ſo muc
the more hard and difficult it is. An
the reaſon is, becauſe man, as man, i
not able to do it.

But Prayer (as aforeſaid) is not on
ly a duty, but one of the moſt eminen
duties ; and therefore ſo much th
more difficult. Therefore *Paul* knew
what he ſaid, when he ſaid, *I will pra
with the Spirit*. He knew well, it wa
no

not what others writ or said, that could make him a praying person; nothing less than the Spirit could do it.

Tenthly, It must be with the Spirit, or else, as there will be a failing in the act it self, so there will be a failing, yea a fainting, in the prosecution of the work. Prayer is an Ordinance of God, that must continue with a soul so long as it is on this side glory.

But, as I said before, it is not possible for a man to get up his heart to God in Prayer; so it is as difficult to keep it there, without the assistance of the Spirit.

And if so, then for a man to continue from time to time in Prayer with God, it must of necessity be with the Spirit.

Christ tells us, That *men ought always to pray, and not to faint*, Luke 18. 1,2. And again tells us, that this is one definition of an Hypocrite, That either *he will not continue in Prayer*, or else, if he do, it will *not be in the power*,

(*Job* 27. 10.) that is, in the Spirit o
Prayer, but in the Form, *for a preten*
only, Mat. 23. 14.

It is the eaſieſt thing of a hundred
to fall from the Power to the Form
but it is the hardeſt thing of many, t
keep in the Life, Spirit and Power o
any one duty, eſpecially Prayer: Tha
is ſuch a work, that a man without th
help of the Spirit cannot ſo much a
pray once; much leſs, continue with
out it in a ſweet praying frame, and i
praying ſo to pray, as to have his Pray
ers to aſcend into the ears of the Lor
God of Sabboth.

Jacob did not only *begin*, but held i
I will not let thee go, unleſs thou bleſs me
Gen. 32.

So did the reſt of the Godly, *Hoſ.* 12
4. But this could not be without th
Spirit of Prayer. *It is through the Spi*
rit that we have acceſs to the Father, Eph
2. 18.

That ſame is a remarkable place i
Jude, when he ſtirreth up the Saint
by the Judgment of God upon th
Wicked

Wicked to ſtand faſt, and continue or hold out in the Faith of the Goſpel, as one excellent means thereto, without which he knew they would *never* be able to do it. Saith he, *Build up your ſelves in your moſt holy Faith, praying in the holy Ghoſt*, Jude 20. As if he had ſaid, *Brethren, as eternal Life is laid up for the perſons that hold out only; ſo you cannot hold out, unleſs you continue praying in the Spirit.*

The great cheat that the Devil and Antichriſt deludes the world withal, it is to make them continue in the Form of any Duty, the Form of Preaching, of Hearing, of Praying, *&c. Theſe are they that have a Form of Godlineſs, but deny the Power; from ſuch turn away*, 2 Tim. 3. 5.

Here followeth the Third Thing; to wit,

What it is to pray with the Spirit and with Understanding.

And now to the next thing, What it is *to pray with the Spirit*, and to *pray with the Understanding also*. For the Apostle put a clear distinction between *praying with the Spirit*, and *praying with the Spirit and Understanding*. Therefore when he saith, he *will pray with the Spirit*, he addeth, *and I will pray with the Understanding* [*also*] This distinction was occasioned through the *Corinthians* not observing that it was their duty to do what they did to the Edification of themselves, and others too; whereas they did it for their own commendations. So I judge. For many of them having extraordinary gifts, *as to speak with divers tongues*, &c. therefore they were

were more for those mighty gifts, than they were for the edifying of their Brethren; which was the cause that *Paul* wrote this Chapter to them, to let them understand, that though extraordinary gifts were excellent, yet, to do what they did to the edification of the Church, was more excellent. *For* (saith the Apostle) *if I pray in an unknown tongue, my Spirit prayeth, but my Understanding* (and also the Understanding of others) *is unfruitful.* Therefore, *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also*, 1 Cor. 14. 4, 5, --12, 13, 14, 15, *&c.* read the scope of the whole Chapter.

It is expedient then that the *Understanding* should be occupied in Prayer, as well as the heart and mouth; *I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Understanding also.* That which is done with Understanding, is done more effectually, sensibly and heartily, (as I shall further shew anon) than that which is done without it. Which made the Apostle pray for the *Colossians*, *That*

God

God would fill them with the knowledge of his Will, in all wisdom, and spiritual understanding, Col. 1. 9. And for the *Ephesians*, *That God would give unto them the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the knowledge of him*, Eph. 1. 17. And so for the *Philippians*, *That God would make them abound in knowledge and in all judgment*, Phil. 1. 9.

A suitable understanding is good in every thing a man undertakes, either Civil or Spiritual; and therefore it must be desired by all them that would be a praying People.

In my speaking to this, I shall shew you what it is to pray with Understanding.

Understanding is to be taken both for speaking in our *Mother-Tongue*, and also *Experimentally*.

I shall pass the first, and treat only on the second.

For the making of right Prayers, it is to be required, that there should be a good or spiritual understanding in all them who pray to God.

First,

First, To pray with understanding, *to pray as being instructed by the Spirit, in the understanding of the want of those things which the Soul is to pray for.*

Though a man be in never so much need of pardon of sin, and deliverance from wrath to come, yet if he understand not this, he will either not desire them at all, or else be so cold and like-warm in his desires after them, that God will even loath their frame of spirit in asking for them. Thus it was with the Church of the *Laodiceans*, they wanted knowledge or spiritual understanding; They knew not that they were *poor, wretched, blind and naked*: The cause whereof, made them, and all their services, so loathsom to Christ, that he threatens *to spue them out of his mouth*, Rev. 3. 17.

Men without understanding, may say the same words in prayer as others do, but if there be an understanding in the one, and none in the other; there is, Oh there is a mighty difference in speaking the very same words! The

one

one ſpeaking it from a ſpiritual under
ſtanding of thoſe things, that he i
words deſires; and the other words
only, and there is all.

Secondly, Spiritual underſtanding
eſpieth in the heart of God, a readine
and willingneſs to give thoſe things to th
ſoul, that it ſtands in need of.

David by this, could gueſs at the ver
thoughts of God towards him, *Pſa*
40. 5.

And thus it was with the woman
Canaan (*Mat.* 15. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26
27, 28.) ſhe did by Faith and a righ
Underſtanding, diſcern (beyond a
the rough carriage of Chriſt) tende
neſs and willingneſs in his heart t
ſave, which cauſed her to be vehemen
and earneſt, yea, reſtleſs, until ſhe di
enjoy the mercy ſhe ſtood in nee
of.

An underſtanding of the willingne
that is in the heart of God to ſave ſin
ners, there is nothing will preſs th
ſoul more to ſeek after God, and to cr
for pardon, than it. If a man ſhoul
ſe

ee a Pearl, worth an hundred pounds, ye in a ditch, yet if he understood not he value of it, he would lightly pass it by; but if he once get the knowledge of it, he would venture up to the neck for it.

So it is with souls concerning the things of God; If a man once get an understanding of the worth of them, then his heart, nay the very strength of his soul runs after them, and he will never leave crying till he have them.

The two blind men in the Gospel, because they did certainly know that Jesus, who was going by them, was both able and willing to heal such infirmities as they were afflicted with, therefore they cryed, *and the more they were rebuked, the more they cryed*, Mat. 20. 29, 30, 31.

Thirdly, The Understanding being spiritually enlightned *hereby, there is the way* (as aforesaid) *discovered through which the soul should come unto God*; which gives great encouragement unto it.

It

It is else with a poor soul, as with one who hath a work to do, and if it be not done, the danger is great; if it be done, so is the advantage: but he knows not how to begin, nor how to proceed, and so through discouragement, lets all alone, and runs the hazard.

Fourthly, The enlightned understanding, *sees largeness enough in the Promise to encourage it to pray*, which still adds to it strength to strength. As when men promise such and such things to all that will come for them, it is great encouragement to those that know what promises are made, to come and ask for them.

Fifthly, The Understanding being enlightned, *way is made for the soul to come to God with suitable arguments.*

Sometimes in a way of expostulation, as *Jacob*, *Gen.* 32. 9. Sometimes in way of supplicatian, yet not in a verbal way only, but even from the heart there is forced by the Spirit, through the understanding, such effectual Arguments, as moveth the heart of God.

When

When *Ephraim* gets a right understanding of his own unseemly carriages towards the Lord, then he begins to *bemoan himself*, Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. and in bemoaning of himself, he useth such Arguments with the Lord, that it affects his heart, draws out forgiveness, and makes *Ephraim* pleasant in his eyes through Jesus Christ our Lord. *I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus* (saith God) *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised; as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoak: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God. Surely after I was turned, I repented, and after I was instructed* (or had a right understanding of my self) *I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.*

These be *Ephraim*'s complaints, and bemoanings of himself; at which the Lord breaks forth into these heart-melting expressions, saying,

Is Ephraim my dear Son? Is he a pleasant Child? For since I spake unto him, I do

I do earneſtly remember him ſtill; there-fore my bowels are troubled for him: I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord.

Thus you ſee, that as it is required to pray with the Spirit, ſo it is to pray with the Underſtanding alſo.

And to illuſtrate what hath been ſpoken by a ſimilitude:

Set the caſe there ſhould come two a begging to your door, the one is a poor, lame, wounded, and almoſt ſtarved creature; the other is a healthful luſty perſon.

Theſe two uſe the ſame words in their begging, the one ſaith he is almoſt ſtarved, ſo doth the other; but yet the man that is indeed the poor lame, or maimed perſon, he ſpeaks with more ſence, feeling and underſtanding of the miſery that is mentioned in their begging than the other can do; and it is diſcovered more by his affectionate ſpeaking, his bemoaning himſelf: His pain and poverty makes him ſpeak more in a ſpirit of Lamentation than

han the other, and he ſhall be pittied ooner than the other, by all thoſe that ave the leaſt dram of natural affection r pity.

Juſt thus it is with God.

There are ſome who out of cuſtom nd formality, go and pray; there are thers, who go in the bitterneſs of their pirit: The one he prayes out of bare notion, and naked knowledge; the ther hath his words forced from him y the anguiſh of his ſoul. Surely, that s the man that God will look at, even *im that is of a humble and contrite ſpi-it, and that trembleth at his word*, Iſa. 6. 2.

Sixthly, An underſtanding well enightned, is of admirable uſe alſo, *oth as to the matter and manner of Pray-r.*

He that hath his underſtanding well exerciſed, to diſcern between good and evil, and in it placed a ſence, either of he miſery of man, or the mercy of God; that ſoul hath no need of the Writings of other men, to teach him

by

by Forms of Prayer : For as he tha
feels the pain, needs not to be learne
to cry, *Oh!* Even ſo, he that hath h
Underſtanding opened by the Spiri
needs not ſo to be taught of other men
prayers, as that he cannot pray withou
them : the preſent ſence, feeling, an
preſſure that lyeth upon his ſpirit, pro
vokes him to groan out his requeſts un
to the Lord.

When *David* had the pains of he
catching hold on him, and the ſorrow
of hell compaſſing him about, he need
ed not a *Biſhop in a Surplice*, to lear
him to ſay, *O Lord, I beſeech thee deli
ver my ſoul*, Pſal. 116. 3, 4. Or to loo
into a Book to teach him in a Form t
pour out his heart before God.

It is the nature of the heart of ſic
men, in their pain and ſickneſs, to ven
it ſelf for eaſe, by dolorous groans and
complaints to them that ſtand by.

Thus it was with *David*, in *Pſal.* 38
to the 12. *verſe*. And thus, bleſſed be
the Lord! it is with them that are indu
ed with the Grace of God.

Seventh-

Seventhly, It is neceſſary that there
an enlightned underſtanding, to the
nd that the ſoul be kept in a continu-
ion of the duty of Prayer.

The People of God are not ignorant
ow many wiles, tricks, and temptati-
ns the Devil hath to make a poor ſoul,
ho is truly willing to have the Lord
eſus Chriſt, and that upon Chriſt's
arms too; I ſay, to tempt that ſoul
be wearyof ſeeking the face of God,
nd to think that God is not willing to
ave mercy on ſuch a one as him. I,
ith Satan, thou mayeſt pray indeed,
ut thou ſhalt not prevail. Thou ſeeſt
ine heart is hard, cold, dull and dead,
hou doſt not pray with the Spirit, thou
oſt not pray in good earneſt, thy
houghts are running after other things,
hen thou pretendeſt to pray to God.
way hypocrite, go no further, it is but
n vain to ſtrive any longer.

Here now, if the ſoul be not well
nformed in its underſtanding, it will
reſently cry out, *The Lord hath for-
aken me, and my God hath forgotten me*,

Iſa.

Isa. 45. 27. Whereas the soul rightly informed and enlightned, saith; *Well I will seek the Lord, and wait; I will not leave off, though the Lord keep silence, and speak not one word of comfort*, Isa. 49. 14.

He loved *Jacob* dearly, and yet he made him wrestle before he had the blessing, *Gen.* 32. 25, 26, 27.

Seeming delayes in God are no tokens of his displeasure; he may hide his face from his dearest Saints, *Isa.* 8. 17. He loves to keep his People praying, and to find them ever knocking at the Gate of Heaven: It may be, says the soul, the Lord tries me, or he loves to hear me groan out my condition before him.

The Woman of *Canaan* would not take seeming denials for real ones, she knew the Lord was gracious, *Luke* 18. 1, to 6. And the Lord will avenge his People, though he bear long with them. The Lord hath waited longer upon me, than I have waited on him: And thus it was with *David*, I waited

ited patiently, ſaith he : That is, It as long before the Lord anſwered me, ough at the laſt, *he enclined his ear unme, and heard my cry*, Pſal. 40. 1.

And the moſt excellent remedy for is, is an underſtanding well informd and enlightned.

Alas, how many poor ſouls are there the world, that truly fear the Lord ; ho, becauſe they are not well informd in their underſtanding, are oft reay to give up all for loſt, upon almoſt very trick and temptation of Satan! e Lord pitty them, and help them to ay with the Spirit, and with the Unerſtanding alſo.

Much of mine own experience could here diſcover ; when I have been in y fits of agony of Spirit, I have been rongly perſwaded to leave off, and to ek the Lord no longer ; but being ade to underſtand, what great ſinners e Lord hath had mercy upon ; and ow large his Promiſes were ſtill to nners ; and that it was not the whole, t the ſick ; not the righteous, but the ſinner,

ſinner, not the full, but the empty, tha
he extended his Grace and Mercy un
to.

This made me, through the aſſiſtanc
of his holy Spirit, to cleave to him, t
hang upon him, and yet to cry, thoug
for the preſent he made no anſwer; an
the Lord help all his poor tempted an
afflicted People to do the like, and t
continue, though it be long, accordin
to the ſaying of the Prophet, *Hab.* 2.
And to help them (to that end) to pra
not by the inventions of men, and the
ſtinted Forms, but with the Spirit, an
with the Underſtanding alſo.

And now to anſwer a Query or two
and ſo to paſs on to the next thing.

Query 1.

*But what would you have us poor crea
tures to do, that cannot tell how to pray
the Lord knows, I know not either how
pray, or what to pray for?*

Anſwe

Answer.

Poor heart! Thou canst not (thou complainest) pray. Canst thou see thy misery? Hath God shewed thee that thou art by nature under the Curse of his Law? If so, do not mistake, I know thou dost groan, and that most bitterly. I am perswaded, thou canst scarcely be found doing any thing in thy calling, but Prayer breaks from thy heart, *Rom.* 8. 28. Have not thy groans gone up to Heaven from every corner of thy house? I know 'tis thus; and so also, both thine own sorrowful heart witness by tears, thy forgetfulness of thy calling, *&c?* Is not thy heart so full of desires after the things of another world, that many times thou dost even forget the things of this World? Prethee read this Scripture, *Job* 23. 12.

Query. 2.

Yea, but when I go into secret, and in-

tend to pour out my soul before God, I can scarce say any thing at all.

Answer.

Ah sweet soul! It is not thy words, that God so much regards, as that he will not mind thee, except thou comest before him with some eloquent Oration; His eye is on the brokenness of thine heart, and that it is that makes the very bowels of the Lord run over. *A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*, Psal. 51. 17.

2. The stopping of thy words may arise from over much trouble in the heart. *David* was so troubled sometimes, *that he could not speak*, Psal. 77 3,4. But this may comfort all such sorrowful hearts as thou art, that though thou canst not through the anguish of thy spirit speak much, yet the holy Spirit stirs up in thine heart groans and sighs, so much the more vehement when the mouth is hindred, yet the Spirit is not.

Moses

Moſes, as aforeſaid, made Heaven ring again with his Prayers, when (that we read of) not one word come out of his mouth. But,

3. If thou wouldeſt more fully expreſs thy ſelf before the Lord; ſtudy,

Firſt, Thy filthy Eſtate.

Secondly, Gods Promiſes.

Thirdly, The Heart of Chriſt.

Which thou mayeſt know or diſcern;

1. By his condeſcention and bloodſhed.

2. By the mercy he hath extended to great ſinners formerly; and plead thine own vileneſs by way of bemoaning: Chriſts blood by way of expoſtulation; and in thy prayers, let the mercy that he hath extended to other great ſinners, together with his rich promiſes of grace, be much upon thy heart. Yet let me counſel thee:

1. Take heed that thou content not thy ſelf with words.

2. That thou do not think that God looks only at them neither, But,

3. However, whether thy words be few or many, let thine heart go with them; *And then shalt thou seek him, and find him, when thou shalt seek him with thy whole heart*, Jer. 29. 13.

Object. 1.

But though you have seemed to speak against any other way of praying but by the Spirit, yet here you your self can give directions how to pray.

Answ.

We ought to prompt one another forward to Prayer, though we ought not to make for each other Forms of Prayer.

To exhort to pray with Christian direction is one thing, and to make stinted Forms for the tying up of the Spirit of God to them, is another thing.

The Apostle gives them no form to pray withal, yet directs to Prayer, *Eph.* 6. 18. *Rom.* 15. 30, 31, 32.

Let

Let no man therefore conclude, that becauſe we may with allowance give inſtructions and directions to pray; that therefore it is lawful to make for each other Forms of Prayer.

Object. 2.

But if we do not uſe Forms of Prayer, how ſhall we teach our Children to pray?

Anſw.

My judgement is, that men go the wrong way to learn their Children to pray, in going about ſo ſoon to learn them any ſet company of words, as is the common uſe of poor creatures to do.

For to me it ſeems to be a better way for people betimes to tell their Children what curſed creatures they are, and how they are under the wrath of God by reaſon of original and actual ſin: alſo to tell them the nature of God's wrath, and the duration of the

misery; which if they conscientiously do, they would sooner learn their Children to pray than they do.

The way that men learn to pray, it is by conviction for sin; and this is the way to make our sweet babes do so too. But the other way, namely, to be busie in learning Children Forms of Prayer, before they know any thing else, it is the next way to make them cursed hypocrites, and to puff them up with pride. Learn therefore your Children to know their wretched state, and condition; tell them of hell fire, and their sins, of damnation, and salvation the way to escape the one, and to enjoy the other (if you know it yourselves) and this will make tears run down your sweet babes eyes, and hearty groans flow from their hearts; and then also you may tell them to whom they should pray, and through whom they should pray; you may tell them also of Gods promises, and his former grace extended to sinners, according to the word.

Ab

Ah! poor ſweet babes, the Lord open their eyes, and make them holy Chriſtians. Saith *David*, *Come ye Children, hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord*, Pſalm 34. 11.

He doth not ſay, I will nuzle you up in a Form of Prayer; but, *I will teach you the fear of the Lord*; Which is to ſee their ſad ſtates by nature, and to be inſtructed in the truth of the Goſpel, which doth through the Spirit beget Prayer in every one that in truth learns it: And the more you learn them this, the more will their hearts run out to God in Prayer.

God did never account *Paul* a praying man, until he was a *convinced and converted man*, Acts 9. 11. no more will it be with any elſe.

Object. 3.

But we find that the Diſciples deſired that Chriſt would teach them to pray, as John *alſo taught his Diſciples*; *and*,

that thereupon he taught them that Form called the Lord's Prayer.

Answ.

First, To be taught by Christ, is that which not only they, but we desire; and seeing he is not here in his person to teach us, the Lord teach us by his Word and Spirit; for the Spirit is it which he hath said he would send to supply in his room when he went away, as it is, *John* 14. 16. and 16. 7.

Secondly, As to that called *a Form*, I cannot think that Christ intended it as a stinted Form of Prayer.

First, Because he himself layeth it down diversly, as is to be seen, if you compare, *Matth.* 6. with *Luke* 11. Whereas, if he intended it as a set-Form, it must not have been so laid down: for a set-Form is so many words and no more.

Secondly, We do not find that the Apostles did ever observe it as such, neither

neither did they admoniſh others ſo to do: Search all their Epiſtles: Yet ſurely they, both for knowledge to diſcern, and faithfulneſs to practiſe, were as eminent as any He ever ſince in the World, which would impoſe it.

But in a word; Chriſt by thoſe words, *Our Father, &c.* doth inſtruct his People what Rules they ſhould obſerve in their Prayers to God.

1. That they ſhould pray in Faith.
2. To God in the Heavens.
3. For ſuch things as are according to his Will, *&c. Pray thus*; or, *after this manner.*

Object. 4

But Chriſt bids, Pray for the Spirit: This implyeth, that men without the Spirit, may notwithſtanding pray, and be heard: *See* Luke 11. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Answ. 1. The speech of Christ there is directed to his own, *vers.* 1.

2. Christ is telling of them, that God would give his holy Spirit to them that ask him, is to be understood of giving more of the holy Spirit; For still they are the Disciples spoken to, which had a measure of the Spirit already; for he saith, *When ye pray, say, Our Father*, &c. v. 2. *I say unto you*, v. 8. And, *I say unto you*, vers. 9. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Christians ought to pray for the Spirit, that is, for more of it, though God hath endued them with it already.

Quest.

Then would you have none pray, but those that know they are the Disciples of Christ?

Answ

Answ. Yes.

1. Let every soul that would be saved, pour out it self to God, although it cannot, through temptation, conclude it self a Child of God. And,

2. I know if the grace of God be in thee, it will be as natural to thee to groan out thy condition, as it is for a sucking Child to cry for the breast.

Prayer is one of the first things that discovereth a man to be a Christian, *Acts* 9. 12. But yet if it be right, it is such Prayer as followeth.

First, To desire God in Christ, for Himself, for his Holiness, Love, Wisdom and Glory. For right Prayer, as it runs only to God through Christ, so it centers in him, and in him alone; *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none in Earth that I desire* (long for, or seek after) *besides thee*, Psal. 73. 25.

Secondly,

Secondly, That the ſoul might enjoy continual Communion with him, both here and hereafter. *I ſhall be ſatisfied, when I awake, with thine Image*, or *in thy likeneſs*, Pſal. 17. 15. *For in thee we groan earneſtly*, &c. 2 Cor. 5. 2.

Thirdly, Right Prayer is accompanied with a continual labour after that which is prayed for. *My ſoul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning*, Pſal. 130. 6. *I will ariſe now and ſeek him whom my ſoul loveth*, Cant. 3. 2.

For mark, I beſeech you, there is two things that provoke to Prayer: One is, a deteſtation to ſin, and the things of this life; The other is, a longing deſire after Communion with God, in an holy and undefiled ſtate and inheritance.

Compare but this one thing with moſt of the Prayers that are made by men, and you ſhall find them but mock-prayers, and the breathings of an abominable ſpirit; for even the moſt

most of men, either not pray at all, or else only endeavour to mock God and the World, by so doing: for, do but compare their prayer, and the course of their lives together, and you may easily see that the thing included in their prayer, is the least looked after by their lives. Oh sad Hypocrites!

Thus have I briefly shewed you,

1. What Prayer is.

2. What it is to pray with the Spirit.

3. What it is to pray with the Spirit, and with the Understanding also.

I shall now speak a word or two of Application, and so conclude: with,

1. *A word of Information.*

2. *A word of Encouragemant.*

3. *A word of Rebuke.*

Use.

USE. I.

A Word of Information.

For the first, to inform you, That a Prayer is the duty of every one of the Children of God, and carried on by the Spirit of Christ in the Soul: So every one that doth but offer to take upon him to pray to the Lord, had need be very wary, and go about that work *especially* with the Dread of God, as well as with hopes of the Mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

Prayer is an Ordinance of God, in which a man draws very near to God and therefore it calleth for so much the more of the assistance of the Grace of God, to help a soul to pray, as becomes one that is in the presence of him.

It is a shame for a man to behave himself irreverently before a King, but a sin to do so before God. And as

a King (if wise) is not pleased with an Oration made up with unseemly words and gestures; *So God takes no pleasure in the sacrifice of fools*, Eccles. 5. 1, 4.

It is not long discourses, nor eloquent tongues, that are the things which are pleasing in the ears of the Lord; but *a humble, broken and contrite heart* (*Psal.* 51. 17. *Isa.* 57. 15.) that is sweet in the nostrils of the heavenly Majesty.

Therefore for information, know, that there are these *Five Things* that are obstructions to Prayer, and even make void the requests of the creature.

First.

When men regard iniquity in their hearts, at the time of their Prayers before God. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer*, Psal. 66. 18. For the preventing of temptation, that by the misunderstanding of this, may seize thy heart; when there is a secret love to that very

very thing, which thou with thy dissembling lips dost ask for strength against. For this is the wickedness of man's heart, that it will even love, and hold fast that, which with the mouth it prayeth against; and of this sort are they, *that honour God with their mouth, but their heart is far from him*, Ezek. 33. 31.

Oh how ugly would it be in our eyes, if we should see a beggar ask an alms, with intention to throw it to the Dogs! Or, that should say with one breath, pray you bestow this upon me; and with the next, I beseech you give it me not. And yet thus it is with these kind of persons; with their mouth they say, *Thy will be done*; and with their hearts nothing less. With their mouth say, *Hallowed be thy Name*; and with their hearts and lives, they delight to dishonour him all the day long.

These be the prayers that become sin, *Psal.* 109. 7. and though they put them up often, yet the Lord will never answer them, 2 *Sam.* 22. 42.

Second-

Secondly.

When men pray for a ſhew to be heard, and thought ſome-body in Religion, and the like.

Theſe prayers alſo fall far ſhort of God's approbation, and are never like to be anſwered, in reference to eternal life.

There are two ſorts of men that pray to this end.

1. Your Trencher-Chaplains, that thruſt themſelves into great mens Families, pretending the Worſhip of God, when in truth the greateſt buſineſs is their own Bellies: which were notably painted out by *Ahab*'s Prophets, 1 *Kings* 18. 19. and alſo *Nebuchadnezzars* wiſe men, *Dan.* 2. who though they pretended great devotion, yet their luſts and their bellies were the great things aimed at by them in all their pieces of devotion.

2. Them alſo that ſeek repute and applauſe for their eloquent tearms, and

ſeek

ſeek more to tickle the ears and head of their hearers, than any thing elſe. Theſe be they that *pray to be heard and ſeen of men, and have all their reward already*, Mat. 6. 5.

Theſe perſons are diſcovered thus.

1. They eye only their Auditory in their expreſſions.

2. They look for Commendation when they have done.

3. Their hearts either riſe or fall according to their praiſe or enlargement.

4. The length of their Prayer pleaſeth them; and that it might be long they will vainly repeat things over and over, *Matth.* 6. 7. They ſtudy for enlargements, but look not from what heart they come. They look for returns, but it is the windy applauſe of men; and therefore they love not to be in a Chamber, but among company; and if at any time conſcience thruſts them into their cloſet, yet hypocriſie will cauſe them to be heard in the ſtreets

treets; and when their mouthes have done going, their prayers are ended; for they wait not *to hearken what the Lord will say*, Psal. 85. 8.

Thirdly.

A third sort of Prayer that will not be accepted of God, it is, When either they pray for wrong things; or, if for right things, yet, that the thing prayed for might be spent upon their lusts, and laid out to wrong ends. *Some have not, because they ask not*, saith James; *and others ask and have not, because they ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts*, Jam. 4. 2, 3, 4.

Ends contrary to God's Will, is a great Argument with God to frustrate the Petitions presented before him. Hence it is, that so many pray for this and that, and yet receive it not; God answereth them only with silence, they have their words for their labour, and that is all.

Object.

Object.

But God heareth some persons though their hearts be not right with him, as he did Israel, in giving Quails, *Psal.* 106. 14. *though they spent them upon their lusts.*

Answer.

If he doth, it is in Judgement, not in Mercy: He gave them their desire indeed, but they had better have been without it, for *he sent leanness into their souls*, Psal. 106. 15. Wo be to that man that God answereth thus.

Fourthly.

Another sort of prayers there are that are not answered, and those are such as are made by men, and presented to God in their own persons only, without their appearing in the Lord Jesus.

For,

or, though God hath appointed Pray-
, and promiſed to hear the Prayer of
e Creature, yet not the Prayer of a-
y Creature that comes not in Chriſt.
you *ask any thing in My Name, &c.*
ohn 14. 13. And, *Whether ye eat or*
ink, or whatſoever ye do, do all in the
ame of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Col. 3.
. If you ask any thing in my Name, I
ill do it, John 14. 14.

Though you be never ſo devout,
alous, earneſt and conſtant in prayer,
t it is in Chriſt only that you muſt
heard and accepted. But alas, the
ſt of men know not what it is to
me to him in the Name of the Lord
ſus, which is the reaſon they either
e wicked, pray wicked, and alſo die
icked. Or elſe,

2. That they attain to nothing elſe
t what a meer natural man may at-
in unto, as to be exact in word and
ed betwixt man and man, and only
th the righteouſneſs of the Law, to
pear before God.

Fifthly.

Fifthly.

The last thing that hindreth Praye
is, The *Forms* of it without the *Powe*
It is an easie thing for men to be ver
hot for such things, as Forms of Pray
er as they are written in a Book, bu
yet they are altogether forgetful to en
quire with themselves, whether the
have the Spirit and Power of Praye
These men they are like a painted ma
and their Prayers are like a false voice
they in person appear as Hypocrites
and their Prayers are an Abomination
*Prov.*28.9. When they say they hav
been pouring out their souls to God
he saith, they have been *howling lik*
dogs, Hos. 7. 14.

When therefore thou intendest,
art minded to pray to the Lord of Hea
ven and Earth, consider these follow
ing Particulars.

1. Consider seriously what tho
wanteſt; do not as many, who in the
words only beat the air, and ask fo
such things as indeed they do not de
sire

re, nor see that they stand in need hereof.

2. When thou seest what thou wantest, keep to that, and take heed thou pray sensibly.

Object.

But I have a sence of nothing; Then by your Argument, I must not pray at all.

Answer.

First, If thou findest thy self sensless in some sad measure, yet thou canst not complain of that sensleſness, but by being sensible.

There is a sense of sensleſness, according to thy sense then, that thou hast of the need of any thing: so pray, (*Luke* 8. 9.) and if thou art sensible of thy sensleſness, pray the Lord to make thee sensible of what-ever thou findest thine heart sensleſs of. This was the usual practice of the holy men of God; *Lord make me to know mine*

end,

end, saith *David*, Psal. 39. 4. *Lord, open to us this Parable*, said the Disciples, *Luke*, 8. 9.

And to this is annexed the Promise, *Call upon me, and I will hear thee, and shew thee great and mighty things that thou knowest not*, Jer. 33. 3. that thou art not sensible of. But,

Secondly, Take heed that thine heart go to God as well as thy mouth; let not thy mouth go any further than thou striveſt to draw thine heart along with it. *David* would lift his heart and soul to the Lord, and good reason: for so far as a mans mouth goeth along without his heart, so far it is but lip-labour only; and though God calleth for, and accepteth the calves of the lips, yet the lips, without the heart, argueth not only senslesness, but our being without sense of our senslesness; and therefore if thou hast a mind to enlarge in prayer before God, see that it be with thy heart.

Thirdly, Take heed of affecting expressions, and so to please thy self with the

he use of them, that thou forget not he Life of Prayer.

I shall conclude this Use with a Caution or two.

First, *Take heed thou do not throw off Prayer, through sudden persuasions that thou hast not the Spirit, neither prayest thereby.*

It is the great work of the Devil to do his best, or rather worst, against the best prayers. He will flatter your false dissembling hypocrites, and feed them with a thousand fancies of well-doing, when their very duties of Prayer, and all other, stink in the nostrils of God; When he standeth at a poor *Joshua's hand to resist him* (Isa. 66. 5. Zech. 3. 1.) that is, to persuade him, that neither his person, nor performances are accepted of God.

Take heed therefore of such false conclusions, and groundless discouragements; And though such persuasions do come in upon thy spirit, be so

far from being discouraged by them, that thou use them to put thee upon further sincerity and restlesness of spirit in thy approaching to God.

Secondly, *As such sudden temptations should not stop thee from Prayer and pouring out thy soul to God, so neither should thine own hearts corruption hinder thee.*

It may be thou mayest find in thee all those things before mentioned, and that they will be endeavouring to put forth themselves in thy praying to him; thy business then is to judge them, to pray against them, and to lay thy self so much the more at the foot of God, in a sence of thy own vileness; and rather make an argument from thy vileness and corruption of heart, to plead with God for justifying and sanctifying grace, than an argument of discouragement and despair.

David went this way; *O Lord*, saith he, *pardon mine iniquity, for it is great*. Psal. 25.

USE

USE. II.

A Word of Encouragement.

Secondly, To ſpeak a word by way of Encouragement (to the poor tempted and caſt-down ſoul) to pray to God through Chriſt. Though all Prayer that is accepted of God in reference to eternal life muſt be in the Spirit, for that only maketh intercetſion for us according to the will of God, *Rom.* 8. 27. Yet, becauſe many poor ſouls may have the holy Spirit working on them, and ſtirring of them to groan unto the Lord for mercy, though through unbelief they do not, nor for the preſent cannot believe that they are the people of God ſuch as he delights in; yet foraſmuch as the truth of grace may be in them, therefore I ſhall, to encourage them, lay down further theſe few particulars.

1. That Scripture in *Luke* 11. 8. is very encouraging to any poor ſoul that

doth hunger after Christ Jesus. In the 5th, 6th, and 7th verses, he speaketh a Parable of a man that went to his friend to borrow three loaves, who, because he was in bed, denied him, yet for his importunity-sake, he did arise and give him; clearly signifying, that though poor souls through the weakness of their faith cannot see that they are the friends of God, yet they should never leave asking, seeking, and knocking at God's door for mercy, *Mat.* 7. 7, 8.

Mark, saith Christ, *I say unto you, Although he will not arise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity* (or restless desires) *he will arise and give him as many as he needeth.*

Poor heart, thou tryest out that God will not regard thee; thou dost not find that thou art a friend to him, but rather an enemy in thine heart *by wicked works*, *Col.* 1. 21. and thou art as though thou didst hear the Lord saying to thee, *Trouble me not, I cannot give unto thee*; as he in the parable; yet I say, continue knocking, crying, moaning and bewailing

wailing of thy self: *I tell thee, though he will not arise and give thee, because thou art his friend; yet because of thy importunity he will arise and give thee as many as thou needest.*

The same in effect you have discovered, *Luke* 18. in the parable of the unjust Judge, and the poor Widow; her importunity prevailed with him.

And verily, mine own experience tells me, that there is nothing that doth more prevail with God, than importunity.

Is it not so with you in respect of your beggars that come to your door? though you have no heart to give them any thing at their first asking, yet if they follow you, bemoaning themselves, and will take no nay without an alms, you will give them; for their continual begging overcometh you.

Are there bowels in you that are wicked, and will they be wrought upon by an importuning beggar? *Go thou and do the like*, Luke 11. 11.

It is a prevailing motive, and that by good experience; *He will arise and give thee as many as thou needest.*

2. Another Encouragement for a poor trembling convinced soul, is, To consider the place, throne, or seat, on which the great God hath placed himself to hear the petitions and prayers of poor creatures; and that is *a Throne of Grace*, Heb. 4. 16. *The Mercy-Seat*, Exod. 25. 22. Which signifieth, that in the dayes of the Gospel God hath taken up his Seat, his abiding-place, in mercy and forgiveness; and from thence he doth intend to hear the sinner, and to commune with him, as he saith, *Exod.* 25. 22. (speaking before of the *Mercy-Seat*) *And there will I meet with thee.* Mark; It is upon the Mercy-Seat; *There will I meet with thee, and there will I commune with thee, from above the Mercy-seat.*

Poor souls! they are very apt to entertain strange thoughts of God, and his carriage towards them, and suddenly

denly to conclude, that God will have no regard unto them; when yet he is upon the Mercy-Seat, and hath taken up his place on purpose there, to the end he may hear and regard the prayers of poor creatures.

If he had said, I will commune with thee from my Throne of Judgement; then indeed you might have trembled and fled from the face of the great and glorious Majesty. But when he saith, he will hear and commune with souls upon the Throne of Grace, or from the Mercy-Seat; this should encourage thee, and cause thee to hope, nay to come boldly to the Throne of Grace, that thou mayest obtain mercy, and find Grace to help in time of need, *Heb.* 4. 16.

3. There is yet another Encouragement to continue in Prayer with God, and that is this.

As there is a Mercy-Seat, from whence God is willing to commune with poor sinners; so there is also by this Mercy-seat, *Jesus Christ who continually*

tinually beſprinkleth with his blood.

Hence it is called, *The Blood of ſprinkling*, Heb. 12. 14.

When the High Prieſt under the Law was to go into the Holieſt, where the Mercy-ſeat was, *he might not go in without blood*, Heb. 9. 7.

Qu. *Why ſo?*

Anſw. Becauſe, though God was upon the Mercy-ſeat, yet he was perfectly juſt as well as merciful.

The Blood was to ſtop Juſtice from running out upon the Perſons concerned in the Interceſſion of the High Prieſt, as in *Levit.* 16. 13, 14, 15, 16. To ſignifie, that all thine unworthineſs that thou feareſt, ſhould not hinder thee from coming to God in Chriſt, for mercy.

☞ Thou cryeſt out, that thou art vile, and therefore God will not regard thy Prayers. 'Tis true, if thou delight in in thy vileneſs, and come to God out of a meer pretence. But if from a ſence of thy vileneſs thou doſt pour out thy heart to God, deſiring to be ſaved from the

the guilt and cleanſed from the filth, with all thy heart; fear not, thy vileneſs will not cauſe the Lord to ſtop his ear from hearing of thee.

The value of the blood of Chriſt which is ſprinkled upon the Mercy-ſeat, ſtops the courſe of Juſtice, and opens a flood-gate for the mercy of the Lord to beextended unto thee.

Thou haſt, *therefore*, as aforeſaid, *boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt, by the Blood of Jeſus, that hath made a new and living way for thee, thou ſhalt not dye*, Heb 10. 19, 20.

Beſides, Jeſus is there, not only to ſprinkle the Mercy-ſeat with his blood; but he ſpeaks, and his blood ſpeaks; he hath audience, and his blood hath audience; Inſomuch, that God ſaith, when he doth but *ſee the blood, he will paſs over you, and the plague ſhall not be upon you*, &c. Exod. 12. 13.

I ſhall not detein you any longer, Be ſober and humble; Go to the Fa-

ther in the Name of the Son, and tell him your case, in the assistance of the Spirit, and you will then feel the benefit of praying with the Spirit, and with Understanding also.

USE III.

A Word of Reproof.

This speaks sadly to you who never pray at all.

I will pray, saith the Apostle; and so saith the heart of them that are Christians.

Thou then art not a Christian, that art not a praying person.

The Promise is, *That every one that is righteous shall pray*, Psal. 32. 6.

Thou then art a wicked wretch that prayest not.

Jacob got the name of *Israel* by wrestling with God, *Gen.* 32. And all his Children bare that name with him, *Gal.* 6.

But the People that forget prayer, that

that call not on the Name of the Lord, they have prayer made for them, but it is such as this, *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, O Lord, and upon the People that call not upon thy Name*, Jer. 10. 25.

How likest thou this, O thou that art so far off from pouring out thine heart before God, that thou goest to bed like a Dog, and risest like an Hog, or a Sot, and forgettest to call upon God?

What wilt thou do when thou shalt be damned in hell, because thou couldst not find in thine heart to ask for heaven?

Who will grieve for thy sorrow, that didst not count mercy worth asking for?

I tell thee, the Ravens, the Dogs, *&c.* shall rise up in Judgment against thee, for they will according to their kind, make signs, and a noise for something to refresh them when they want it; but thou hast not the heart to ask for Heaven, though thou must eternally perish in Hell, if thou hast it not.

2. This

2. This rebukes you that make it your buſineſs to ſlight, mock at, and undervalue the Spirit, and praying by that.

What will you do when God ſhall come to reckon for theſe things?

You count it high Treaſon to ſpeak but a word againſt the King. Nay, you tremble at the thoughts of it; and yet in the mean time you will blaſpheme the Spirit of the Lord.

Is God indeed to be dallied with, and will the end be pleaſant unto you?

Did God ſend his holy Spirit into the hearts of his People to that end, that you ſhould taunt at it? is this to ſerve God? And doth this demonmonſtrate the Reformation of your Church? Nay, is it not the mark of implacable Reprobates?

O fearful! can you not be content to be damned for your ſins againſt the Law, but you muſt ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt?

Must the holy, harmless, and undefiled Spirit of Grace; the nature of God, the promise of Christ, the comforter of his Children, that without which, no man can do any service acceptable to the Father: Must this, I say, be the burthen of your Song, to taunt, deride, and mock at?

If God sent *Corah and his company headlong to hell, for speaking against Moses and Aaron*, Numb. 16. do you that mock at the Spirit of Christ, think to escape unpunished? *Heb.* 10. 29.

Did you never read what God did to *Annanias* and *Saphira*, for telling but one lye against it? *Acts* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

Also to *Simon Magus*, for but undervaluing of it, *Acts* 8. 18, 19, 20, 21.

And will thy sin be a virtue, or go unrewarded with vengeance, that makest it thy business to rage against, and oppose its Office, Service and Help, that it giveth unto the Children of God?

It

It is a fearful thing to do despite unto the Spirit of Grace: compare *Mat.* 12. 31. with *Mark.* 3. 30.

3. As this is the doom of those who do openly blaspheme the holy Ghost, in a way of disdain and reproach to its office and service: So also it is sad for you, who resist this Spirit of Prayer, by a Form of man's inventing. A very juggle of the Devil, that the Traditions of men should be of better esteem and more to be owned, than the Spirit of Prayer.

What is this less than that accursed Abomination of *Jeroboam*, which kept many from going to *Jerusalem*, the place and way of God's appointment to worship, 1 *Kings* 12. 26, *&c.* and by that means brought such displeasure from God upon them, as to this day is not appeased?

One would think that God's Judgements of old upon the Hypocrites of that day, should make them that have heard of such things, take heed and fear to do so.

Ye

Yet the Doctors of our day are so far from taking of warning by the punishment of others, that they do most deperately rush into the same transgression (*viz.*) To set up an Institution of Man, neither commanded nor commended of God: and whosoever will not obey herein, they must be driven either out of the Land, or the World.

Hath God required these things at your hands? If he hath, shew us where. If not (as I am sure he hath not) Then what cursed presumption is it in any, Pope, Bishop, or other, to command that in the Worship of God which he hath not required?

Nay, further: It is not that part only of the Form, which is several Texts of Scripture, that we are commanded to say; but even all must be confessed as the Divine Worship of God, notwithstanding those absurdities contained therein, which because they are at large discovered by others, I omit the rehearsal of them.

Again,

Again, Though a man be willing to live never so peaceably; yet becauſe he cannot for Conſcience-ſake own that, for one of the moſt eminent parts of Gods Worſhip, which he never commanded: therefore muſt that man be looked upon as factious, ſeditious, erroneous, heretical; a diſparagement to the Church, a ſeducer of the People, and what not? Lord, what will be the fruit of theſe things! when for the Doctrine of God, there is impoſed (that is more than taught) the Traditions of Men?

Thus is the Spirit of Prayer diſowned, and the Form impoſed; the Spirit debaſed, and the Form extolled: they that pray with the Spirit, though never ſo humble and holy, counted *Phanaticks*; and they that pray with the Form, though with that only, counted the *Vertuous*. And how will the favorites of ſuch a practice, anſwer that Scripture which commandeth, that the Church *ſhould turn away from ſuch as have a Form of Godlineſs, but deny the*

e Power thereof? 2 Tim. 3. 5.

And if I should say, That men that o these things aforesaid, do advance a orm of Prayer of other mens making, ove the Spirit of Prayer, it would not ke long time to prove it.

For, He that advanceth the *Book of mmon-Prayer*, above the *Spirit of ayer*, he doth advance a Form of ens making above it.

But this do all those who banish, or esire to banish them that pray with e Spirit of Prayer, while they hug d imbrace them that pray by that orm only, and that because they do

Therefore they love and advance e Form of their own, or others in-enting, before the Spirit of Prayer, hich is God's special and gracious ppointment.

If you desire the clearing of the *linor*, look into the Goals in *England*, d into the Ale-houses of the same: and

and I believe you will find those tha
plead for the Spirit of Prayer in th
Goal, and them that look after th
Form of mens Inventions only, in th
Ale-house.

It is evident also, by the silencing o
God's dear Ministers, though never s
powerfully enabled by the Spirit o
Prayer; if they in conscience, canno
admit of that Form of *Common-Prayer*

If this be not an exalting the *Com*
mon-Prayer-Book above either prayin
by the Spirit or preaching the Word,
have taken my mark amiss.

It is not pleasant for me to dwell o
this; the Lord in mercy turn th
hearts of the People to seek more afte
the Spirit of Prayer; and in the streng
of that to pour out their souls befor
the Lord.

Only let me say, It is a sad sign
that that, which is one of the mo
eminent parts of the pretended Wo
ship of God, is Antichristian; whe
it hath nothing but Tradition of men
an

nd the ſtrength of Perſecution to up-
old or plead for it.

The Concluſion.

I ſhall conclude this Diſcourſe with this Word of Advice to to all Gods People.

I.

BElieve, that as ſure as you are in the Way of God, you muſt meet with Temptations.

II.

The firſt day therefore thou doſt enter into Chriſt his Congregation, look for them.

III.

III.

When they do come beg of God to carry the through them.

IV.

Be jealous of thine own heart, that it deceive the not in thy Evidences fo Heaven, nor in thy walk ing with God in this world

V.

Take heed of the flatte ries of false Brethren.

VI.

Keep in the Life and Power of Truth.

VII.

Look most at the things which